and rip out my heart for my sins

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and rip out my heart for my sins

by sebootyslay

Summary

Will witnesses darkness that scared him, and Hannibal for once in a long time feared something.

“Perhaps its better if you struggle for a bit, hm? Give Mr. Roberts here more time to reflect on his mistakes.”
“His sins.” Will spoke. “Mistakes are innocent things. Sins are not.”

Notes

Heyyy another one of these. I really love writing child!will and father!hannibal too much

See the end of the work for more notes

Will didn't flinch as Hannibal cracked the ribs open. Instead, he looked almost bored as the person on the operation table clenched on the gag stuffed in his mouth, voice hoarse of screaming. The man wasn't moving, but he was still alive. Will eyed the IV next to him. Whatever drug Hannibal is injecting into the unfortunate man is rendering him motionless.

"Well then, Mr. Roberts, I believe this is when we say goodbye." Hannibal's voice was almost cheerful. "And since you are a particularly rude person, I saved this task for my son to execute." At those words, Will's head perked up. Hannibal smiled at him and held his bloody hand out. "Come now, Will."

Will placed his stag doll on the ground of the basement and went to his father. He was already wearing surgical gloves as Hannibal were. The man on the table widened his eyes, as if surprised to see the small child still there. Will knows what to do. Hannibal had taught him. Well, he knows what to do theoretically. He's never rip a heart out before, but Will couldn't find it in himself to feel regret. He glanced back at his doll on the ground and suddenly hopped off the stool he had climbed on. Hannibal watched in amusement as the boy turned the stag's head away.

"Are you ready?" Hannibal asked. Will nodded his head. The seven year old flexed his fingers. "Now, as we practiced, darling. It doesn't matter if it doesn't go perfect. It is your first try after all." Hannibal looked down on the man. "Perhaps its better if you struggle for a bit, hm? Give Mr. Roberts here more time to reflect on his mistakes."

"His sins." Will spoke. "Mistakes are innocent things. Sins are not."

"You are right, Will." Hannibal nodded his head. "Now, can you see the heart? See it beating?" Will nodded his head as he looked down into the chest cavity. Neither of them were bothered by the amount of blood gushing out. Hannibal slapped the man's cheeks when his eyes started to droop. "Stay awake now," he chastised. "You wouldn't want to miss the finale."

Will took a deep breath. His eyes scanned the cavity carefully, locating the right arteries and veins, feeling the nodes on where he would need to pull. He looked at Hannibal who just gave him an encouraging nod. Will closed his eyes and with a deep breath, his hands tugged sharply.

Mr. Robert's eyes closed, and he will never open them back again.

3 weeks earlier

"Have you heard about the terrible news happening lately?"

"Oh yes, horrifying! I keep my daughter indoors all the time now. She hates me for it, but I worry for her." The man who the women spoke to sighed. "Teenagers. Monstrous tempers, but you still love them."

“Yes, you do.” The woman nodded somberly as she sipped on her drink. In the corner of her eyes, she saw Hannibal walking past. “Oh, Hannibal!” she called for the host of the dinner party. “Have you heard about the news on the... rapist?” She whispered the last word as if it were a sin to even pronounce it.

“Indeed I have. I have advised all my patients with young daughters to be careful. It is a dreadful tragedy to all the girls victimized.” Hannibal said, face pulled into a genuine expression of regret.

“Such dangerous times we live in.” The man, Mr. Kurtz, said as he sighed yet again. “Do you have any advice on how to handle young teen girls? My daughter has been yelling at me to let her out of the house, but I couldn’t bear to, thinking that monster is out there.”

“Well perhaps start with telling her why the action had been taken. If she still insists on going out, have a chaperone with her.” Hannibal suggested. “Never go out with at least a trusted man or a group of friends no less than 4.”

“What a wonderful idea!”

“It’s a good thing all my children are boys.” The woman, Mrs. Harrison, said. “At least I don’t have to worry.”

“Did you know that there is a male victim as well?” Mr. Kurtz said. The news was met with a shocked gasp, and he man nodded sadly. “Happened to Connor’s boy. Poor boy has been shaken, didn’t want to even go out of his room.”

“Oh goodness me!” Mrs. Harrison looked like she was about to faint. “I have to tell Edward. Edward?” She turned around to look for her husband, eyes distraught. Hannibal looked over to his guests tonight.

“I appreciate you all coming, despite the news. I do hope that you have ensured that all your children are in safe hands.”

“I left mine at my sisters down in Washington for the weekend. Help them get their minds off of things.” Mr. Kurtz shook his head. “Dark times, we live in Hannibal.”

“Dark times indeed.” The man said and sipped his drink. The background music of a harpsichord stopped, and there were applause. Hannibal smiled as he turned around and saw Will shyly thanking the people around him, ducking his head when the attention was too much.

Hannibal had been teaching Will how to play, and even though the boy was seven, he had an amazing mind that quickly picks up skills and a photographic memory. Soon, he was able to play intermediate pieces on the harpsichord. Once he has mastered the instrument, Hannibal had been meaning for the boy to learn how to play violin.

He could see Will slowly slipping into an internal panic at the amount of people still surrounding and applauding him, hence Hannibal decided to save his soon from a future social breakdown.

“Excuse me,” he said to Mr. Kurtz. He quickly walked over to the harpsichord, and Will looked up to him gratefully when he placed a hand on the back of his neck. He leaned into the familiar touch, his blue eyes already glassy and in the verge of tears from all the attention around him.

“T*ėtis*.” The boy turned his head to bury his face at the side of Hannibal’s jacket. That action was meet with coos and fond sighs from the crowd.

“Such a smart and affectionate boy!”

“Polite and loving!”

“Talented and sweet! I wish mine were more like William, Hannibal!”

Hannibal smiled at the crowd as he continued to pet and reassure the shy boy next to him. He felt Will grip on his jacket tighter.

“Thank you all for your praise. I’m afraid William is a bit shy and is still not used to hearing compliments for himself.” Hannibal made Will let go of him, and the boy whimpered. Instead, Hannibal leaned down and gathered the boy in his arms. Will dove into Hannibal’s embrace willingly, letting the man lift him up and hold him against his body. Some might say that carrying a seven year old boy is too much, but Will is so small he looked like he was still six. Hannibal didn’t mind, finding Will’s weight still too light for his liking but unable to increase the mass of his son even after hearty meals. The boy curled in his hold, and the guests just smiled as Hannibal pressed a kiss to his son’s head.

“If you would excuse us for a moment. I think William needs a drink.” The guests let Hannibal carry his son to the kitchen, and Hannibal gently set him on the counter. His face was still red and he refused to let go when Hannibal backed away. “Will.”

“Did I do good, *tėtis*?” his small voice asked. Hannibal petted his head fondly.

“You did wonderful, my darling. More than I expected.” Will looked up to that and Hannibal kissed his forehead. “Wonderfully well.”

“Thank you.” Will said softly and finally let go of Hannibal. The man set to prepare a fresh cup of apple juice for the boy, filling it into Will’s favourite cup and slipping in a straw before giving it to his boy.

“You’ve been spending a lot of energy. Drink up, you will feel better.”

“Thank you.” Will said politely as he took a sip. Hannibal leaned on the counter next to him, and Will let out a pleased noise when Hannibal started stroking his hair, leaning his head on his father’s shoulder.

“You seemed rattled this evening.” Hannibal said. “What has surprised you so much, my darling?”

“What they were talking about. In the news.” Will said as he continued to sip on his drink. “I saw it once on your iPad.”

“Ah, the rapist?”

“Uh huh.” Will looked down at the clear brown liquid of his drink. “I liked Jeffrey.” Hannibal nodded his head. Jeffrey Connor, one of the victims, and the only male one. Will had met Jeffrey before, his father had brought him over during the New Year’s party Hannibal held. The 15 year old was a polite and pleasant boy. Will and Jeffrey got along fairly well, the teen patiently entertaining the seven year old. “He’s nice.”

“He is. It’s a tragedy to what happened to him.”

“The man...” Will placed down the empty glass next to him. “The... rapist. What does he do? What does a rapist do?”

“Well,” Hannibal straightened his posture. “Do you remember what the man you killed wanted to do to you?” Will wrinkled his face at the memory.

“He said he wanted to touch me at my boy parts.”

“Yes, and that is what rapists do. They touch and violate other people’s private and intimate body parts without their consent. They receive sexual pleasure for it, and it is a most vile thing to do.” Will frowned in a show of disgust.

“That is rude.” He said.

“Extremely rude, yes.”

“Don’t we eat the rude, *tėtis*?” Will asked and looked up to his father. Hannibal saw a shadow slowly swallowing the blues of his eyes. “I want to eat him.”

“I would imagine his flesh tasting putrid, my dear.” Hannibal stroked his hair.

“Then,” Will glanced outside to where they grow fresh herbs and flowers in the garden. “We could feed the dogs at the dog park. I think they won’t mind.” Hannibal looked at his son curiously.

“Why do you want us to eat this man, Will?”

“Because.” Will looked up to Hannibal, and the man saw that the dark shadow had already enveloped around the blue irises, deepening its colour and giving it a dark edge. Hannibal heart escalated a little bit at the sight of the beautiful boy in front of him. “He hurts people, *tėtis*. I don’t like that. It’s rude.” Will then turned to look at their kitchen, his stare blank yet focused. “Can we catch him, *tėtis*?”

“I don’t see why not.” Hannibal rarely does vigilante work, but the look in Will’s eyes feels like a good enough reason to start doing so. “I’ll try to think of something, then.”

“I want to read him, actually.” The boy said with a tilt of his head. “I want to know why he did it. I want to know what’s in his head.” There it is, Hannibal thought. It was rather surprising that Will’s intentions was just about pity towards the victims. Instead, it was

curiosity that drove him. A twisted sense of wanting to know, catching the criminal just for the sake of knowing.

Precious boy, Hannibal thought as he kissed the boy's head.

Hannibal had worked out the plan perfectly. Although the police are searching high and low for the rapist, Hannibal knew it would take them a lengthy amount of time for them to even know where to start. Hannibal, however, is a criminal himself and he knows where to start and where to hide. He had analyzed the patterns and victimology, places where the girls were abducted and raped and where they were left for people to find.

Hannibal had never thought of what he was doing is wrong. It is a sort of vigilante work as well, ridding the world from rude people and elevating their once disgusting selves into bodies of art and purifying them. He had told Will this, and the boy nodded his understanding. Hannibal, however, finds people who derives pleasure from sexually violating others incredibly disgusting and vile. Killing someone and eating them is one thing, but to torture a person and leave them with irreparable damage is much crueler.

He thought about Will's desire to read the man. Hannibal figured that it would be detrimental to the boy's brain and mental health, but he too has the same curiosity of the boy. Of course he know why the rapist did what he did, he's a psychiatrist after all. Many have different motives, but they all circulate around the same theme. Hannibal wants to know deeper, wants to really delve into the mind of the sadistic pigs that committed crimes like these. More importantly, Hannibal wants to know Will's reaction when he realizes who people like these usually are. If Will is brave enough to want to read their minds, then Hannibal should let him try.

He had a plan already, and he was starting to arrange his timetable to set them into motion. Finding the man would be easy, Hannibal has enough contacts to locate the man with suspicions raised. Of course, this comes to no difficulty of for the seasoned killer, and soon, Will should get what he wanted. He lifted the phone to call the trusted number he had already memorized in his head. The other line answered on the third ring, but it was quiet. Hannibal knew she would wait.

"*Shi kara mezame, inochi o torimodosu* (Wake from death and return to life)." Hannibal said to the phone. There was another silence before a woman's voice answered.

"*Tora no dōkutsu ni hairanai to, kodomo o tsukamaeru koto wa dekimasen* (If you do not enter the tiger's cave, you will not catch its cub)." Hannibal smiled at the sound of the voice.

"Good evening, Chiyoh."Hannibal greeted, knowing full well that Chiyoh would not answer to his pleasantries. "I need you to find me someone and bring him to me."

"Who?"

"Come by for tea tomorrow, and I will tell you. I would rather discuss this face to face, and I missed you terribly." Hannibal smiled at the phone, imagining the woman rolling her eyes.

“You know the dress code.”

“Very well.” Was all she said before ending the phone call. Hannibal placed the phone back to its receiver and scribbled more notes on his planner.

He was thinking on what to serve for tomorrow’s tea.

“Who is coming over, *tėtis?*” Will asked as Hannibal adjusted the bow tie on his collar. He had noticed that his father had laid out a wonderful spread on the table for tea.

“An old friend. She is going to help us on our mission.” He saw Will lightening up at the mention of that.

“She knows?”

“Yes.” Hannibal answered. “Now I want you to behave properly, Will. One of her people’s main principle is respect, and I would expect you to do so.”

“Yes, *tėtis.*” Will nodded his head. He was rewarded with a squeeze to the back of his neck. The doorbell rang, and Will suppressed the urge to run and open it to see who it was. Hannibal straightened his posture, and Will mirrored the same. The man walked over to the door and opened it. A woman wearing a beautiful black dress and a hat entered. Her skin was pale and her lips were blood red. Will was in trance for a while. The woman looked down sharply to Will, and the boy gulped.

“Small.” Was her comment as she gave Hannibal her hat and coat. The man chuckled.

“He is.”

“Unexpected.” Her hazel eyes lifted to look into Hannibal’s burgundy ones. “Special, is he?”

“Yes.” The woman noticed the shine in his eyes and glanced back to Will who tried to not shake so visibly. She observed him carefully, and a slow, predatory smile crept up her face.

“He has killed.”

“Two.” Hannibal said proudly. “Both on his own will.” She looked over to Hannibal and tilted her head, a sign for him to continue. “His eyes turn the most beautiful blues when he does, and his mind works in wondrous ways.”

“You really have a soft spot for beauty.” She said and walked past them. Will blinked, confused, intimidated yet interested. He came to his senses when Hannibal extended a hand to him.

“Come now, Will. Let’s eat.” He said. Will took his head and nodded as they walked to the dining room where the woman was already seated. Will took his usual seat, making him sitting opposite from her as Hannibal pulled out his usual chair at the head of the table. “Will, this is Chiyoh. She is a family friend.”

“H-hello, Chiyoh.” Will timidly greeted her. Chiyoh just blankly stared at him, and Will squirmed in his seat.

“Chiyoh, be more gentle with him please. He has a sensitive heart.” Hannibal said to her. Chiyoh finally relented her gaze and looked at the man instead.

“Never like you to pick up strays.”

“He fills my heart.”

“You can whisper to a caterpillar through its chrysalis, but whatever comes out will follow its own nature.” She said with a raised brow. Hannibal regarded her calmly.

“A boy raised by wolves can learn to howl and hunt like them.”

“Nature’s forces cannot be defeated, Hannibal.” Hannibal poured her a cup of tea and handed it to her.

“Yes, I know. It seemed like nature wanted to gift me something. Another soul made from the same mold as I am. Made with the same tongue as I do have.” That made her pause as she looked over at Hannibal.

“So he is a predator.”

“A hunter.”

“He has choices then.” She sipped on the tea. “What if he slips and the trigger changes its target?”

“He will not.”

“How would you be certain?” Chiyoh saw Hannibal smile wide, one that sent shivers down her spine.

“Loyalty is something hard to gain, but when given?” Hannibal glanced at Will who was just staring at the exchange in confusion. “Tremendous results. Love laced with loyalty? Now that is a punishing and lethal combination. Almost nothing can waver it.”

“Do you? Feel that for him?”

“He fills the space next to Mischa.” Hannibal said, and that was all Chiyoh needed. She nodded her head.

“Fine then.” She let Hannibal arrange a few pastries on her plate and placed it front of her. She watched as Hannibal do the same for the boy.

It seems like the boy was quite shaken by her presence, and she saw Hannibal bend down to whisper something in his ears. A small hand gripped the pressed suit jacket, yet Chiyoh did not see any resentment from the man regarding his wrinkled attire. He instead pressed a soft kiss to the boy’s head. That eased the grip, and Hannibal cupped the boy’s cheek to turn to

look at him. They shared a look that Chiyoh had only seen when Hannibal looked at Mischa that surprised her. She looked away, feeling like she was intruding. When she dared to look back, the boy's face was no longer fearful. He instantly relaxed at the fond look from Hannibal's eyes and the man sat back down on his seat.

"So this man you are looking for." She said after eating a tart. "Who is he?"

"A rapist."

"Why the sudden interest?"

"Not from me, but Will wanted to find him." Chiyoh hummed as she chased down the buttery taste of pastry with the light tea.

"Why do you need to find him?" she asked, and Will realized that question is for him. The seven year old once again squirmed in his seat.

"Chiyoh, be gentle." Hannibal reminded her. Chiyoh sighed.

"Will, why do you need me to find this man?" she asked again, voice softer and eyes not as intense. Will blinked at the sudden change.

"I..." he hesitated and glanced at his father. Hannibal nodded and gave him an encouraging smile. "I want to read him. I want to see who he is."

"Curiosity killed the cat, you know?" Chiyoh said casually, but Will no longer seemed intimidated by her. He instead had a curious look on his face.

"An untrained one would die. One who is trained would win." Will's answer made Chiyoh smile, a rarity.

"Smart words for a seven year old boy." Will blinked and smiled back. "Hannibal said you can read people?"

"You are a little bit difficult to see." Will said truthfully. Chiyoh hummed again. She nodded her head and let the boy eat without being asked any further questions. After finishing what is on her plate, she dabbed her lips with the edge of the napkin.

"You want to find the man in the news, do you not?"

"Yes."

"Alive?"

"Yes, please." Chiyoh's face wrinkled at that.

"Give me three days." She finalized as she stood up. Hannibal followed, and Will also jumped down from his seat. "I will inform you when I leave him."

“Let him loose a little. I love a good chase.” Chiyoh rolled her eyes as they walked back to the front door. Hannibal reached for the doorknob but stopped when he saw a small spider crawling on the wall next to it.

Hannibal stopped to see what would happen to spider. His eyes observed to where it went. Chiyoh, on the other hand, had moved faster and caught the thing by it’s legs. Before she could crush it, she felt a something tug the ends of her dress. She looked down and saw Will laying both his hands out to her, palms upturned. Chiyoh regarded him for a second before giving him the spider. Both of the adults silently watched as Will cradled the spider in one hand and ran to the sliding door that opened to the patio and the backyard. Pushing the door open, he ran into the garden and bent down to let the spider crawl off his hand and onto the soil. He dusted his hand and walked back in, tapping his shoes at the door to remove any clinging soil. Hannibal glanced at Chiyoh and the woman shrugged.

“No use in letting pests live.”

“No harm in letting one return to where it belongs.” Will replied softly, and Hannibal chuckled. He gave Chiyoh her coat and hat before opening the door for her.

“I’m glad to have you for tea, Chiyoh.” He said, mirth still evident in his eyes. Chiyoh too could not resist an upturned smirk of her lips.

“He is an interesting boy.” She adjusted her hat. “I hope he stays.”

“He will.” Hannibal affirmed. They exchanged nods and Will watched from behind his father as Chiyoh walked back into the street and disappeared.

Hannibal stood in front of the basement door as he waited for Will. The boy came down, holding his stag doll to his chest tightly as walked straight towards Hannibal. It had been a nervous three days for him. He is excited to see the man yet scared at the same time.

“Are you ready, Will?” Hannibal asked. Will looked up to him and took a deep breath.

“Can he talk?” Hannibal thought for a while.

“Maybe. He can think, but can’t move.” He said. Will was silent, and Hannibal waited patiently. He will always have infinite patience for his darling boy.

“Okay. I wanna see him.” Will hugged the stag doll tighter, and Hannibal opened the door. There, Will saw, strapped to a chair that resembles a reclining dentist chair, was the man.

The rapist.

He had a sturdy build, Will observed. Easy to overpower women, Will thought. *And men*, he added sourly. He had copper brown hair, and his eyes, despite it being half open, are a shade of deep brown. He wasn’t handsome, but he wasn’t ugly either. Will looked at him in confusion. He could get himself a willing partner if he wanted to with his looks. Why would he use force for? What a waste of time and energy.

Hannibal watched as Will slowly neared the man. He could see the gears rotating in the boy's head. The man isn't going to escape any time soon, and Will is still at a relatively safe distance. He leaned on the workshop table, content to just watch what his son would do.

"What do you see, Will?" Hannibal prompted when Will was silent for so long.

"Anger." Will murmured as he looked at the man from head to toe. There were a few cuts and bruises on his face, no doubt from whatever method Chiyoh used to capture him. "Regret."

"Regret for what he did?" Hannibal raised an eyebrow.

"No." Will shook his head. "Regret for what he didn't do." Will then reached out and gently touched the man's hand. It twitched a little, and Will withdrew with a gasp. He looked up at the man, and Hannibal could see anger boiling in him. "Murderer." He hissed.

"He's a rapist, Will. Not a murderer." Will shook his head violently.

"He has blood on his hands." Will circled the man, eyes sharp like a hawk. His hold on the stag doll made Hannibal think that the doll would be torn open if Will's nails were sharp enough. "I want him to talk."

"Alright." Hannibal easily went over to the man and pressed a clip on the tube that connected the man to an IV bad that was filled with a yellow liquid. "This might take a few minutes." Hannibal said. Will, fear all gone it seems, just stood in front of the man and waited. Hannibal slapped his face gently for a few moments, and slowly, the man's eyes fluttered open.

"Wha, what?" he looked around blearily.

"Hello. What is your name?" Hannibal asked politely.

"Where am I?" he asked and coughed. "What is this place."

"My basement. Now, I do think you didn't answer my previous question. What is your name, sir?" Hannibal repeated the question. The man groaned.

"Ugh... fuck you man. What the fuck am I doing here? Why am I tied up and shit?" The man tried to yank his arms and legs free but to no avail. "The fuck man, let me go!" Hannibal frowned.

"Swearing in the presence of a child is incredibly rude, Mr. Roberts. Of course, I do know your name. I just thought it would be polite to ask you, but since you lack of proper manners, I believe it would be useless."

"A child? What the...?" The man's eyes, Mr. Roberts, focused a bit and saw Will behind Hannibal's leg. "What the fuck is this huh? Bring your kid to work day? Fucking hell..."

"Are you the rapist?" Will asked bluntly. The man's eyes dilated before returning back to its original size.

“What? No way man, why would I? I just-argh!” He yelled when a searing pain shot through his leg. He looked down and saw Will holding a dagger’s handle, it’s blade already buried in his left thigh. “Fucking shit!”

“I don’t like lies.” Will said, voice monotonous. “*Tėtis* said lying is a bad thing, and doing bad things makes you rude.”

“I don’t fucking care man, what are you-shit!” he yelled again when Will yanked the curved dagger out of his thigh and stabbed it into another spot. “What the fuck, kid?!” His eyes went up to Hannibal. “Control your fucking kid, man!” Hannibal tutted as he shook his head.

“Cursing is rude, Mr. Roberts.” Hannibal said and smiled. “Rude people should be punished.”

“And this isn’t rude? Fuck!” Will had yanked the dagger out and was looking at him.

“Are you the rapist?” he asked again.

“No!” And he screamed when Will stabbed his right thigh, this time dragging the blade down. “Fuck, stop!” the man had tears in his eyes.

“He prefer sins of omission rather than outright lies. So Mr. Roberts, I believe that it is better for you to confess.” Hannibal said calmly.

“Are you the rapist?” Will asked, left hand clutching the stag doll and right hand gripping the dagger. He saw the man heaved a heavy breath and tried to hold his tears.

“Yeah, yes. I am, please stop.” He heaved out a ragged breath. Will looked up at him, his blue eyes met with brown ones. Will felt something surge into him and he gasped. He tripped on his own legs and fell over on his butt, eyes wide and horrified.

“Will?” Hannibal slowly approached him. “Will, are you alright?” He knelt down to touch him, but Will shied away. “Will,” Hannibal called. “What do you see?”

“You... monster.” Will said with a wavering voice. “Monster. Monster.” He shook his head and closed his eyes tightly. The dagger and stag doll lie forgotten next to him as he clawed at his own chest. “Monster monster monster!” Will’s voice escalated into yells and Hannibal immediately went to his son’s side.

“Will, stop it. Will!” Hannibal held both of the child’s wrists in a firm hold. He forced Will to look up, and saw that his son was freely crying. “Oh, my precious boy.” Hannibal quickly pulled Will onto his lap, the bleeding man behind them forgotten. “Shh, it’s alright, Will.”

“Monster monster monster.” Will mumbled, eyes still wide and glazed over. It wasn’t the beautiful shadow Hannibal had loved to see. It was a faraway gaze, a blankness indicating that whatever Will had saw horrified him to the core and sent him deep into his mind.

“Darling boy, my love.” Hannibal kissed his forehead. “Come back to me. Come back, Will.” Hannibal kept whispering for Will, calling him from wherever Will had ran to hide in his wonderful head. The man behind them groaned as he cried for help, but all went to deaf ears as Hannibal for once in a very long time felt like his heart was breaking into two. “Will, come

back to me. Come here, precious boy." He whispered, all the while pressing kisses to his head, hands steadily stroking the boy's back and another clutching him close.

It took a while. It took a long while, enough for the man behind them to pass out as well. Hannibal was still calling for his sweet boy to come back to him, and slowly, the blank look in Will's eyes faded.

"*Tėtis*?" he called, voice weak. Hannibal felt like bursting into tears hearing his voice.

"Yes, darling? I'm here, Will. I always am." He held Will close, and he felt small hands clutch his shirt. Will buried his face in his chest as he felt the boy heave in deep breaths.

"I wanna go. Please." He pleaded, and Hannibal would do anything for his little boy. Hannibal stood up with Will in his arms, picked up the stag doll and kicked the dagger far away from the unconscious man and went upstairs.

In the living room, he laid Will on the couch and rushed to the kitchen to get his son a glass of water. When he returned, Will whined out and extended his hands for him, and Hannibal sat down, gladly letting the boy crawl up to sit on his lap and curl around him like a baby. Hannibal gently coaxed him to drink the water.

"Good boy." He praised as Will drank about half the glass. "My sweet, darling boy." Hannibal kisses his forehead again, and Will sighed into the touch.

"I saw..."

"We don't have to talk about it if you don't want to, Will."

"I saw," Will ignored him. "I saw... power. I feel powerful at seeing fear. At seeing tears and cries of help. I feel... satisfied." Will choked on his own breath. "Oh t*ėtis*, it was horrible. It was disgusting."

"I know. I know, my love." Hannibal pulled him close to his body. "I'm sorry."

"He... he forced them. It made it him feel good to see them suffer. Made him feel good to hear them... beg." Will wiped away his tears, accepting the stag doll Hannibal offered him. He clutched the doll to his chest. "One... one said no too much. One moved too much. So he... he..."

"Killed her?"

"And then," Will closed his eyes, and Hannibal didn't need him to continue. He shushed Will.

"It's alright, Will. I know. It's okay. You don't have to say it." He had always known humans are vile and cruel creatures. He is one of the predators that roamed the Earth. He had seen all walks of life admitting to horrific acts of cruelty and injustice, but seeing his son experiencing first hand on what evil feels like broke his heart. He suddenly realized that after all his life living fearlessly, he had developed one fear.

The fear of losing Will.

He had never felt this fear since the death of Mischa, and he hoped that he would never feel it again. It was a heart-wrenching feel that could take down even a predator like him.

Love can strengthen, yet love destroys so easily. Hannibal could only laugh at the irony. Love is what builds you and holds you tall. Love, when acted, can change and make a beloved's potential grow and flourish, yet love also destroys you from the inside and eats at your heart like moths on clothes, slow and painful.

"He deserves to die."

"He does."

"Slowly."

"Of course."

"Please kill him, *tėtis*." Will looked up to him, eyes hopeful and now darkened by the familiar dark shadow that Hannibal recognizes with a relief. "Kill him, and rip his heart out."

Present day

"Oh Hannibal, I never knew you love animals!" a friend, Mrs. Naya said. Her dog sniffed the filled dog bowl and wagged its tail in delight. Hannibal smiled.

"Please, Jacquinta, let your dog help himself to the treat." With that cue, Mrs. Naya nodded her head at her dog and the pooch happily went up to one of the filled dog bowls and started eating. Hannibal glanced at the stray dogs who were enjoying the juicy meal of raw meat and organs, a healthy diet for dogs, naturally. A giggle made him smile as he spotted his son in between getting licks and hugs from what it seemed like 5 dogs around him. Will's joyous laughter rang like angel's voices to Hannibal's ears, the spark of happiness in his eyes brilliant, as bright as the shadow that clouded it yesterday as he ended the beating of a heart.

"Why suddenly the charity, Hannibal?" Mrs. Naya's voice jostled him back to reality. He smiled politely and gestured to Will who was happily rolling around on the grass with the dogs.

"It was all William's idea. We had all this extra meat that would go bad, so he suggested that we feed the dogs here."

"What a kindhearted boy you have." She gushed. "You must be so proud!"

"Yes, indeed I am." Hannibal smiled and glanced back to his son. "He's a darling."

End Notes

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